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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/686,705	10/17/2003	Yuuji Sawanaga	243643US-2TTC	8805
22850 7590 04/20/2007 OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C. 1940 DUKE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			EXAMINER BLECK, CAROLYN M	
			ART UNIT 3626	PAPER NUMBER
SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE		NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE	
3 MONTHS		04/20/2007	ELECTRONIC	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

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patentdocket@oblon.com
oblonpat@oblon.com
jgardner@oblon.com

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/686,705

Applicant(s)

SAWANAGA ET AL.

Examiner

Carolyn M. Bleck

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 December 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 and 25-38 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 and 25-38 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Notice to Applicant

1. This communication is in response to the amendment filed on 29 December 2006. Claims 1-23 and 25-38 are pending. Claims 1, 3, 14, 19, 21, 22, 25-31, 33-34, and 36-38 have been amended. Claim 24 has been cancelled.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The rejection of claims 1-38 is withdrawn under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1-4, 8-9, 11-18, 23-30, 33-34, and 36-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Friz et al. (5,786,994) in view of Applicant's Background of the Invention.

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(A) As per claims 1-2, Friz discloses a performance monitoring system for a laser medical imager in a medical facility connected to a performance monitoring system (46) (Abstract; col. 11 lines 44-65) comprising:

(a) a performance monitoring system for acquiring data representative of performance conditions, including errors, for the laser imager (Fig. 3, col. 3 lines 33-45, col. 8 line 61 to col. 9 line 11, col. 11 lines 44-65, col. 21 lines 33-49);

(b) memory in the performance monitoring system for storing the data representative of performance conditions for the laser imager (Fig. 3, col. 11 line 44 to col. 12 line 21);

(c) system (46) for logging the frequency of errors (col. 15 lines 34-61); and

(d-e) system (46) for comparing the frequency of each type of error to a threshold, wherein if the frequency of a particular error exceeds the threshold, system (46) recognizes a potential oncoming fault condition and automatically initiates an order for a service technician to visit the location associated with the particular laser imager and visually displaying a report on a panel of the errors for a laser imager user (col. 12 lines 13-21; col. 15 lines 34-61).

Friz does not expressly disclose a prediction unit configured to calculate an expectancy of the parameter data to be received in the future based on the stored parameter data. Fritz suggests that the system anticipates conditions that could render a laser imager unusable (col. 15 lines 34-61).

However, Applicant's Background of the Invention admits that this is well known in the art. See Applicant's specification, lines 8-11, "Still further, it is also known, in a

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general maintenance field, that a future expectancy is predicted based on measured values and an advance response is performed according to a comparison between the future expectancy and a predetermined reference value.”

At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include the features of Applicant’s Background of the Invention within the system of Friz with the motivation of enabling a greater degree of anticipation of conditions that could render the laser imager unusable and proactively initiating a service call (Friz; col. 15 lines 54-61).

Claim 1 has been amended to recite “connected to a network.” Fritz discloses the performance monitoring system connecting to laser imagers over public telephone lines (col. 11 lines 20-44).

Claim 1 has been amended to recite “a second reception unit connected to the network configured to receive a reference request for the expectancy from a requester; and a providing unit connected to the network configured to allow the requester to refer to information of the expectancy based on the received reference request.” As per these limitations, Friz discloses system 46 sending a request to processor 16 (reads on “reception unit” and “providing unit”) to visibly display the report on a display panel associated with laser imager 14(1)-14(n) (col. 12 lines 16-21).

Claim 1 has been amended to recite “an informing unit configured to issue a notice to the medical facility through the network according to the *value of the expectancy*.” As per this limitation, Friz discloses system (46) for comparing the frequency of each type of error to a threshold, wherein if the frequency of a particular

error exceeds the threshold, system (46) recognizes a potential oncoming fault condition and automatically initiates an order for a service technician to visit the location associated with the particular laser imager and visually displaying a report on a panel of the errors for a laser imager user (col. 12 lines 13-21; col. 15 lines 34-61).

(B) As per claim 3, Friz discloses comparing the number of errors to a threshold (col. 15 lines 46-60). For the teaching of "the expectancy," it is noted that Applicant teaches this limitation in the Background of the Invention as being well known in the art. See the teaching of "an advance response is performed according to a comparison between the future expectancy and a predetermined reference value." See Applicant's specification, lines 8-11.

(C) As per claim 4, Friz discloses a threshold including an upper threshold level (reference line (82)) and lower threshold level (reference line 84)) of the parameter data (Fig. 4-6c, col. 4 lines 12-41, col. 10 lines 31-58, col. 12 lines 38-65, col. 13 line 64 to col. 14 line 26).

(D) As per claims 8-9, Friz discloses issuing notices to electronic mail addressees and issuing reports of errors when a parameter exceeds a threshold as discussed in the rejection of claim 1. Friz does not expressly disclose having multiple thresholds and changing addresses and the content of messages based on the thresholds. The Examiner respectfully submits that utilizing multiple thresholds (i.e., ranges) and

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messaging and changing content based on which range the data falls into are well known in the art of programming, and one skilled in the art would have been motivated to modify the teachings of Friz and Applicant's Background of the Invention to include these features in order to ensure that the proper service technician is notified (Friz; col. 15 lines 33-60).

(E) As per claims 11, Applicant's Background of the Invention discloses the prediction unit calculates the expectancy by statistically analyzing the stored parameter data (page 2, lines 3-11).

(F) As per claims 12-13, Friz discloses the parameter data representing a characteristic regarding a part of the medical equipment at each of a plurality of times and the parameter data is given for each of a plurality of parts of the medical equipment (Fig. 4-9).

(G) As per claims 14-15 and 30, Friz discloses receiving and calculating data at a predetermined time (i.e., when the number of errors exceeds a threshold) (Fig. 4-9, col. 15 lines 33-60).

(H) As per claims 16-17, Friz discloses providing data and reports through a telecommunications network (col. 11 lines 45-65). See the rejection of claim 1 for a discussion of "the expectancy."

(I) As per claim 18, Friz discloses data being provided through electronic mail (col. 11 line 65 to col. 12 line 21). It is noted that electronic mail is provided through an Internet web site. See the rejection of claim 1 for a discussion of "the expectancy."

(J) Claim 23 repeats limitations addressed in claim 1, and therefore is rejected for the same reasons, and incorporated herein.

(K) As per claim 25, Friz discloses a technician generating a report and storing the report onsite in a file stored in a computer memory device (col. 10 lines 32-36), wherein the technician uses the reports to determine whether parameters fall within the applicable tolerances established for the references to assess image quality (col. 10 lines 32-58) (reads on "the requestor is a computer provided in a local maintenance provider which providers maintenance for the medical equipment").

(L) As per claim 26, Friz discloses a processor and laser imager in a medical facility (Fig. 3, col. 11 line 66 to col. 12 line 22).

(M) As per claim 27, Friz discloses a processor associated with the performance monitoring system (Fig. 3, col. 6 line 55 to col. 7 line 4, col. 11 line 66 to col. 12 line 22).

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(N) As per claim 28, Friz discloses the informing unit issuing the notice allowing a reference of a graph which shows the stored parameter data and the expectancy with the first and second threshold levels in chronological order, wherein the stored parameter data and the expectancy are shown in a distinguishable manner (Fig. 4-6c, col. 4 lines 12-41, col. 10 lines 31-58, col. 11 line 66 to col. 12 line 21, col. 12 lines 38-65, col. 13 line 64 to col. 14 line 26).

(O) Claim 29 repeats the limitations of claims 1 and 30, and is therefore rejected for the same reasons as those claims, and incorporated herein.

(P) Claim 33 repeats the limitations of claim 1, and therefore is rejected for the same reasons as claim 1.

(Q) Claims 34 repeats the limitations of claim 1, and therefore is rejected for the same reasons as those claims.

(R) As per claim 36, Friz discloses a laser imager and processor (reads on "medical facility apparatus") and a remote performance monitoring system (reads on "a medical equipment management apparatus") (see Figure 3). The remaining features of claim 36 have been discussed in claim 1, and are rejected for the same reasons given for claim 1.

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(S) As per claim 37, Friz discloses a user receiving an email on a computer for receiving reports about errors occurring on a laser imager (Fig. 3, col. 11 line 66 to col. 12 line 21). The remaining features of claim 37 have been discussed in claims 1 and 36, and are rejected for the same reasons given for those claims.

5. Claims 5-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Friz et al. (5,786,994) and Applicant's Background of the Invention as applied claim 1, in view of Ridolfo (6,735,549).

(A) As per claim 5, Friz and Applicant's Background of the Invention fail to expressly disclose the predetermined threshold includes an upper threshold level and a bottom threshold level of the parameter data.

Ridolfo discloses component monitoring utilizing alarm/alert limits using thresholds, bands, and frequency filters (col. 5 lines 62-67). It is noted that using bands and thresholds are considered to be a form of "an upper threshold level and a bottom threshold level of the parameter data."

At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include the features of Ridolfo within the system of Friz and Applicant's Background of the Invention with the motivation of ensuring that equipment is repaired, refurbished, or replaced before the equipment fails (Ridolfo; col. 5 lines 7-14) and allowing data gathered on system components to be compared to expected regions of operation for the monitored components (Ridolfo; col. 5 lines 63-67).

(B) As per claims 6-7, Friz discloses the informing unit issuing the notice allowing a reference of a graph which shows the stored parameter data and the expectancy with the first and second threshold levels in chronological order, wherein the stored parameter data and the expectancy are shown in a distinguishable manner (Fig. 4-6c, col. 4 lines 12-41, col. 10 lines 31-58, col. 11 line 66 to col. 12 line 21, col. 12 lines 38-65, col. 13 line 64 to col. 14 line 26).

6. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Friz et al. (5,786,994) and Applicant's Background of the Invention as applied claim 1, in view of Kucek et al. (6,832,199).

(A) As per claim 10, Friz discloses messaging a service provider when the number of errors exceeds a threshold (col. 15 lines 33-61) (reads on "urgent"). Friz and Applicant's Background of the Invention fail to expressly disclose the first content representing a necessity of a maintenance service for the medical equipment without urgency. Kucek discloses sending non-urgent messages to a service center and field engineer (col. 3 lines 4-40). At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include the features of Kucek within the system of Friz and Applicant's Background of the Invention with the motivation of distinguishing between urgent and non-urgent messages.

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7. Claims 19-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Friz et al. (5,786,994) and Applicant's Background of the Invention as applied claim 1, in view of Babula et al. (6,381,557).

(A) As per claims 19-22, Friz and Applicant's Background of the Invention fail to expressly disclose a second storage unit configured to store maintenance contract information of the medical equipment, wherein the determination unit determines the level based on the stored maintenance contract information, and wherein the stored maintenance contract information is changed by an external terminal connected to the apparatus through the network.

Babula discloses a second storage unit configured to store maintenance contract information of the medical equipment, wherein the determination unit determines the level based on the stored maintenance contract information, and wherein the stored maintenance contract information is changed by an external terminal connected to the apparatus through the network (col. 2 lines 10-32, col. 13 line 54 to col. 14 line 37, col. 21 line 48 to col. 23 line 24). Babula discloses transmitting a service request (col. 26 lines 11-23). As per the recitation of "the level," see the discussion in rejection of claim 1. As per the recitation of "the notice," see the discussion in rejection of claim 1.

At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include the features of Babula within the apparatus taught collectively by Friz and Applicant's Background of the Invention with the motivation of

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tracking licensing information between service providers and providers of medical diagnostic and imaging systems (Babula; col. 1 lines 27-40 and col. 2 lines 1-32).

8. Claims 31-32, 35, and 38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ridolfo (6,735,549) in view of Applicant's Background of the Invention.

(A) As per claim 31, Ridolfo discloses a system comprising:

(a) a sensor system for monitoring a parameter indicative of an operating condition of at least one of the components in the system and an equipment failure and degradation module that receives an input from the sensor system (Fig. 2, col. 4 line 32 to col. 5 line 14, col. 12 lines 44-53);

(b) a digital computer for processing the measurements of the parameters (Fig. 2, col. 4 line 32 to col. 5 line 24, col. 12 lines 44-53) (It is respectfully submitted that a digital computer processing data must store the data in memory to process the data (Fig. 2)) ;

(c) an equipment failure and degradation module of a digital computer to predict if any equipment is in danger of failing and to predict the remaining equipment life by analyzing the measurements and processing the collected data sets using trend analysis, wherein the trend analysis monitors changes in selected measurement parameters over time and predicts if the equipment is in danger of failing (col. 4 line 66 to col. 5 line 29, col. 12 lines 40-63);

(d) a date-of-failure predictor module that determines and displays the date that a failure in the monitored component will likely occur prior to a probability, wherein the date-of-failure predictor module determines the date that a failure in the monitored component will likely occur for the specified probability from a failure distribution model for the monitored component developed by the equipment failure degradation module (col. 4 line 66 to col. 5 line 29, col. 11 lines 8-25, col. 12 lines 40-63);

(e) a workstation for receiving a request for a date from the workstation (Fig. 2(10), col. 10 line 64 to col. 11 line 25, col. 12 lines 40-56); and

(f) a digital computer for calculating the date using a date-of-failure predictor module (Fig. 2(10), col. 10 line 64 to col. 11 line 25, col. 12 lines 40-56).

As per the recitation "medical equipment provided in a medical facility," Ridolfo does not expressly disclose this feature.

Applicant's Background of Invention discloses medical equipment provided in a medical facility (page 1, lines 19-26).

At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include the features of Applicant's Background of the Invention within the system of Ridolfo with the motivation of ensuring that equipment is repaired, refurbished, or replaced before the equipment fails (Ridolfo; col. 5 lines 7-14).

Claim 31 has been amended to recite that each system element is "connected to a network." As per this limitation, Ridolfo discloses a data network (Fig. 2).

(B) As per claim 32, Ridolfo discloses issuing a notice to a workstation according to a date (Fig. 2, 10, col. 10 line 64 to col. 11 line 25).

(C) Claims 35 and 38 repeat the limitations of claims 31-32, and are therefore rejected for the same reasons given for those claims.

Response to Arguments

9. Applicant's arguments filed 24 January 2007 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant's arguments will be addressed below in the order in which they appear in the response filed 24 January 2007.

(A) At pages 16-17 of the response filed 24 January 2007, Applicant argues the "second reception unit connected to the network configured to receive a reference request for the expectancy from a computer" is not taught by the prior art.

In response, the Examiner respectfully submits that claim 1 recites "a second reception unit connected to the network configured to receive a reference request for the expectancy from a requestor." Friz discloses that system 46 may send a request to processor 16 to visibly display the report on a display panel associated with laser imager 14(1)-14(N). The Examiner is interpreting system 46 to be "a computer" or a "requestor" as required in this limitation and is interpreting processor 16 to be a "second reception unit." See col. 12 lines 66 to col. 12 lines 21.

As per Applicant's argument that what is "known" to applicants in Japan is not an admission as to what is known in the United States, the Examiner respectfully submits that a statement by an applicant during prosecution identifying the work of another as "prior art" is an admission that that work is available as prior art against the claims, regardless of whether the admitted prior art would otherwise qualify as prior art under the statutory categories of 35 U.S.C. 102. *Riverwood Int'l Corp. v. R.A. Jones & Co.*, 324 F.3d 1346, 1354, 66 USPQ2d 1331, 1337 (Fed Cir. 2003). See also, MPEP § 2129. Further, in *Tyler Refrigeration v. Kysor Industrial Corp.*, 277 USPQ 845 (Fed. Cir. 1985), the court permitted the use of admitted prior art in an anticipatory rejection, and there was no statutory basis cited for invalidating the patent. And, in another Federal Circuit decision, *Constant v. Advanced Micro-Devices Inc.*, 7 USPQ2d 1057, 1063 (Fed. Cir. 1988), the court stated that "[a] statement in a patent [application] that something is in the prior art is binding on the applicant...for determinations of anticipation and obviousness." Thus, Applicant's statements in the Background of the Invention are considered to be "prior art" regardless of whether it qualified under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a).

(B) At pages 17-18 of the response filed 24 January 2007, Applicant argues the "the predetermined threshold includes a first threshold level and a second threshold level exceeding the first threshold level" is not taught by the prior art.

Ridolfo discloses typical methodologies that are utilized by the equipment failure and degradation modules to ascertain the potential of incipient equipment failures and to predict the equipments remaining life, wherein a methodology entitled "limits and

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ranges" includes component monitoring using alarm/alert limits using thresholds, bands, and frequency filters (col. 5 lines 25-29 and col. 5 lines 60-67). Ridolfo discloses the use of ranges, thresholds and bands. A range or band would include, for example, a high value and a low value (i.e., 50 to 100). This is a form of a first threshold level and a second threshold level exceeding the first threshold level. Further, the use of "thresholds" implies the use of multiple thresholds (i.e., threshold of 50 and 100). This would also be a form of first threshold level and a second threshold level exceeding the first threshold level.

(C) At pages 18-19 of the response filed 24 January 2007, Applicant argues that the prior art fails to teach "a determination unit connected to the network configured to determine a date when the expectancy is substantially identical to a predetermined threshold."

Ridolfo discloses (a) a date-of-failure predictor module that determines and displays the date that a failure in the monitored component will likely occur prior to a probability, wherein the date-of-failure predictor module determines the date that a failure in the monitored component will likely occur for the specified probability from a failure distribution model for the monitored component developed by the equipment failure degradation module (col. 4 line 66 to col. 5 line 29, col. 11 lines 8-25, col. 12 lines 40-63); (b) a workstation for receiving a request for a date from the workstation (Fig. 2(10), col. 10 line 64 to col. 11 line 25, col. 12 lines 40-56); and (c) a digital

computer for calculating the date using a date-of-failure predictor module (Fig. 2(10), col. 10 line 64 to col. 11 line 25, col. 12 lines 40-56).

Applicant argues that the inputted probability is not a predetermined threshold. The Examiner respectfully disagrees. As noted in MPEP § 2111, during patent examination, claims are given their broadest reasonable interpretation consistent with the specification. It is proper to use the specification to interpret what the applicant meant by a word or phrase recited in the claim. However, it is not proper to read limitations appearing in the specification into the claim when these limitations are not recited in the claim. See *In re Paulsen*, 30 F.3d 1475, 1480, 31 USPQ2d 1671, 1674 (Fed. Cir. 1994); *Intervet America Inc. v. Kee-Vet Lab. Inc.*, 887 F.2d 1050, 1053, 12 USPQ 2d 1474, 1476 (Fed. Cir. 1989). Applicant has failed to provide a definition for a “predetermined threshold” and thus, the Examiner has given this limitation the broadest reasonable interpretation and has interpreted the “probability” in Ridolfo to be a form of “predetermined threshold.”

Conclusion

10. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within

TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Carolyn Bleck whose telephone number is (571) 272-6767. The Examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday, 8:00am – 5:30pm, and from 8:30am – 5:00pm on alternate Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Joseph Thomas can be reached at (571) 272-6776.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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12. Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231


Or faxed to:

(571) 273-8300 [Official communications]

(571) 273-8300 [After Final communications labeled "Box AF"]

(571) 273-6767 [Informal/ Draft communications, labeled "PROPOSED" or
"DRAFT"]

Hand-delivered responses should be brought to the Knox Building, Alexandria, VA.


Carolyn M. Bleck
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 3626

4/10/07